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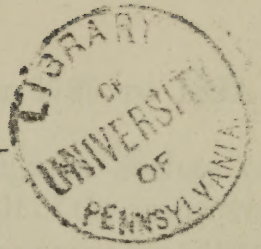








HISTORY



OF

THE ASSOCIATIONS OF FRIENDS

FOR THE

FREE INSTRUCTION

OF

ADULT COLORED PERSONS,

IN

PHILADELPHIA.

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PUBLISHED BY DIRECTION OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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PHILADELPHIA.

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1890.

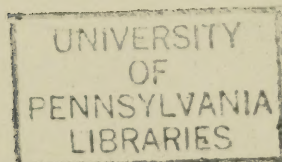
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## PREFACE.

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“The Association of Friends for the Free Instruction of Adult Colored Persons,” apprehending that the various records of the efforts of Friends of Philadelphia, in their possession, would prove interesting to many, if collated and printed in the form of a History of the various organizations established from time to time, as occasion seemed to require, since the year 1789, concluded to publish the account contained in the following pages, with the hope that while preserving in a shape accessible to the general reader, the record of the early and more recent labors of Friends in this cause, those of the present day, and those who may succeed them will be incited to renew their interest; and as occasion may arise, render all the assistance which may seem called for at their hands; that faithfulness in the cause may at no period be wanting on the part of Friends.





300 C. of Friends  
ACCOUNT OF THE MEN'S DEPARTMENT FROM 1789 TO 1822.

In looking over the records of the religious Society of Friends, with reference to their efforts on behalf of the improvement of the condition of the Colored Race, it appears that they were in the first place principally directed towards effecting their deliverance from the state of bondage in which they were held.

The Society began early in the last century to perform its share in the cause of Emancipation; a great work to be accomplished, for slavery had been entailed for generations, and but few in the Christian World of that day regarded it as other than a proper if not righteous institution.

Commencing within their own Society, the Friends concerned in the cause labored with such of their members as held slaves for their release, and were in time, enabled to clear the Society of the stain of holding fellow creatures in bondage; and having thus placed themselves in a position to plead the Black Man's cause, the Society moved forward in the work, and their labors and the results of them are now matters of history.

Upon the work of emancipation followed that of education, and the children of the People of Color in Philadelphia appear first to have been provided for by Friends in 1770, by the establishment of the schools, known by the name of "Schools for the Black People and their Descendants."

For the instruction of Adult Colored Persons, a society was instituted in 1789, on the Fifth day of the Ninth month, for "the free instruction of orderly Blacks and People of Color." "In consideration of the disadvantages which many well disposed Blacks and People of Color labor under from not being able to read, write or cast accounts, which would qualify them to act for themselves, or provide for their families." Their motto was, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due when it is in the power of thine hand to do it."—Prov. III. 27.

It appears that the members of this Society were quite young in years, but their minutes indicate that their affairs were conducted with dignity and with efficiency. It further appears probable that the members had been engaged in the



work before formally organizing themselves into a society; for the minutes of their first meeting directed a request to the Trustees of the Negro School for the use of their school-room on Miller's Alley, occupied during the day by Daniel Britt; and the minutes of the second meeting state that the standing committee reported "that the application to the Trustees was favorably received, and Daniel Britt's consent obtained; in consequence of which they have come to a conclusion to open a school in Daniel's room on Second day next, *as well as to continue that heretofore held at Mary Brown's*. This reference to the school at Mary Brown's indicates that it had been established previously.

Reports from both schools were regularly made, showing that a deep interest was taken in conducting them; and that for the most part the scholars were progressing satisfactorily.

At the third meeting the minutes state, "Some offers of payment from the Masters of bound servants and others, having been made unsolicited, it appears to be our general opinion that they may be accepted in compensation for our labors, and that the money thence arising should be applied to the benefit of the poorer scholars, or to other purposes of the school, and it is concluded that 12s. 6d., (\$1.66) will be a moderate charge for the season."

Correspondence was maintained with associations of Friends in Baltimore, Burlington and Trenton, and with individuals at Newport and other points, all of whom appear to have been similarly engaged in the work of educating the Colored People by means of Evening Schools. From the tenor of the letters preserved, it is to be inferred that difficulties were encountered by all, but great satisfaction experienced as they were overcome and the work progressed. The small number of the laborers was the principal cause of discouragement in most cases, but they seem to have kept in good cheer, and to have persevered.

Many of the letters speak hopefully of the time then believed to be not far distant, when the prejudice for Color would disappear, and the Black Man's rights be generally



acknowledged as equal with those of the White; and the two stand alike before the law. The last letter to these co-operating societies, that is recorded, was written in 1798.

The minutes of Third Month 13th, 1790, contain the following: "The days now becoming too long to admit of a regular Evening School, we unite with the proposal of the committee to discontinue that for the women on Fifth, and that for the men on Sixth day evening next; but believing there will be an essential use in holding a weekly school to prevent our scholars from forgetting what little they have learned, it is concluded to hold a men's school every Fourth day evening, which regulation is to be continued until our next meeting, on trial."

This school on Fourth day evening appears to have been continued during the summer. The attendance was small and irregular, but otherwise satisfactory.

The subject of holding schools on First day afternoon, for "reading, useful employment and religious instruction," was under consideration at this meeting also, and postponed through several adjourned meetings. A diversity of sentiment appeared upon this subject, and the matter was dropped; but at the desire of some members of the Abolition Society it was afterwards reconsidered, and the schools were opened.

These schools on First day afternoon appear to have been held "to good satisfaction," and to have been attended by "a considerable number of sober persons of both sexes, to whom they appear to be of good service." A school for men was also held the ensuing summer, and was satisfactory. The attendance was small, (about twelve) but regular; and the school was also held in like manner until 1796, after which it was dropped for the time.

The regular evening schools were again opened in the Fall of the year 1790, the men's in the Willing's Alley School House, but the women's appeared to be unsettled, and held in several places, there being difficulties in procuring a place for it; persons having room adapted for the purpose being very averse to granting their use to the society; but it was finally returned to Mary Brown's in the Second Month, 1791, she



agreeing to hire "her front room at 15s. for the remainder of the season." In the Fall of 1792 the men's school was regularly opened and satisfactorily conducted, the scholars in attendance sometimes numbering upwards of fifty.

The women's school appears to have been taken charge of during the season by a number of women Friends, who, two years later, finally organized themselves into an association for this purpose.

In the ensuing season Daniel Britt was appointed Teacher of the school, at a salary of fifteen shillings per week, the assistance needful being furnished in turn by the members of the Society. The number of scholars however was small, being from twelve to thirty. The funds for the payment of the teacher were received from the Committee of Education of the Abolition Society.

At the meeting of the Society held Third month 8th, 1794, a committee was appointed to confer with the committee of Education of the Abolition Society on the subject of the continuance of the Evening Schools, it appearing from the minutes about this time to be the opinion of the members that the said committee of Education would conduct the schools to better advantage than they could. Three members of the Committee of Education met in the Fourth month in conference with the Society and informed them that in case of their relinquishment of the school the subject must of necessity be taken up by the Abolition Society; but the matter was deferred from month to month, and finally decided by the Society continuing the school as usual.

The account for the next several years presents few new features in the conduct of the schools. The minutes of Ninth month 15th, 1800, state: "It having been heretofore concluded that such Black lads whose Masters are bound or disposed to pay for their schooling," are not proper subjects of this institution. The subject was considered whether a separate school for this class might not be properly established; but it was concluded that it could not be done without conflicting with the Constitution.

In the Seventh month of 1802, the visiting committee



reported that in the conduct and deportment of the scholars there had been more striking marks of gratitude than usual.

About the commencement of the year 1803, the Society experiencing a difficulty in procuring a sufficient number of assistant teachers, from among their members, it was after due consideration concluded to change the mode of conducting the school by the employment of permanent assistant teachers instead of relying entirely upon the aid of the members serving weeks by turns; and the school in the ensuing season was conducted by Benjamin Mears as "constant teacher," and John McColim, "permanent assistant teacher," who were assisted by a member of the committee appointed for each week.

In 1808 the Constitution was revised and published, together with an introduction, showing the labors and effects of the labors of the Society up to that time.

In 1809 the subject of holding a school on First day afternoon was revived, and the school directed to be held, commencing at the third hour. The committee who had charge of it deemed it proper to dispense with the assistance of a teacher and conduct it themselves by "threes." In the report at the end of the summer, the number of scholars attending is stated as an average of eighteen, and continues: "As the school was held but once a week, the opportunity of improvement which it afforded was small. There were, however, a few whose advancement was observable, and we believe that all were in some measure benefitted by their attendance; under the impression of this belief we are united in opinion that the endeavors of the Society were not improperly directed in opening the school, and we feel no regret on our part for having directed the small portion of our time which the oversight of it required."

The First-day School was held during the ensuing two years, and then appears to have been again discontinued.

In 1811 two lads were employed to assist the teacher, instead of one grown person, and their salaries were one dollar per week. The plan was considered to be a good one and recommended for future adoption.

Collection committees were appointed twice a year, who obtained about sixty dollars semi-annually; but the collection for 1814 was larger than usual, being \$159.

In 1817 the report of the visiting committee was printed, and one hundred copies distributed among Friends interested in the cause.

The visiting committee reported in the Fifth month, 1820, after the close of the school for the season. "We have generally given attention to our appointment during the past winter, but owing to several establishments of a similar kind, the number was less than at some former periods."

About this time the subject, here alluded to, of the education of the Colored Race was engaging the attention of the community at large, and in 1819 the public schools, then recently established, were open to the admission of this class. The interest thus exhibited extended also to the adult portion of the colored people, and was manifested by the establishment of other schools for their benefit, which are alluded to in the following minute of the association of Second month, 9th, 1822.

The minutes state that "during the present season there has been so small a number of scholars attending, owing to other schools being established, having the same object in view, that this meeting has had under consideration the propriety of discontinuing the school, which is referred to our next meeting." At the next meeting a committee was appointed to collect and lay before the Society all such information respecting the means of educating the colored people as they could obtain, whose report was as follows:

"To the Society for the Free Instruction of the Black People":

The committee appointed at your last meeting to inquire into the means of instruction within the reach of colored persons in this city, report the following list principally obtained from Joseph M. Paul, who has made particular inquiry into this subject; and which they have every reason to believe are substantially correct:



## Schools for Colored Children.

Name.	Male.	Female.
Clarkson School, . . . . .	103	86
Willings' Alley Day Schools, . . . . .	69	63
Friendly Association, Northern Liberties, . . . . .	16	15
Solomon Clarkson, colored teacher, . . . . .	22	6
Quamminy Clarkson, . . . . .	13	3
Jeremiah Gloster, . . . . .	16	16
William Levily, . . . . .	13	10
Sarah Howard, . . . . .		12
E. Walkin and E. Matheus, . . . . .	11	10
Abagail Quamon, . . . . .	3	3
Jane Hutt, colored teacher (?) . . . . .	7	6
Henry Simmons, colored teacher, . . . . .	9	4
Elizabeth Green, " . . . . .	7	18
Augustine School, . . . . .	20	
Ruth Hand, white teacher, . . . . .	10	20
	<hr/> 319	<hr/> 272

"A few, perhaps eight or ten in the above schools, are adults. The Adelphi School Society's fund has been lately appropriated to the same object."

## SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS.

"The Union Adult School Society has three schools for colored persons; one in the sessions house of the Third Presbyterian Church in Cherry Street above Fifth, on Seventh, First and Second day evenings, attended by upwards of two hundred colored adults, throughout the year; one in the Clarkson School house in Cherry Street, attended by one hundred persons on the same evenings; one in the Academy in Locust Street by Tenth, on Second and Fourth day evenings, attended by fifty persons. There is also another school of about the same size in the latter place, held on two other evenings in the week by another society, but of which no very precise account was procured. These schools embrace relig-

ious and literary instruction, and are taught gratuitously by members of the Society. The whole expense of the three first mentioned not exceeding four hundred dollars annually.

Signed:      WILLIAM A. BUCKS, }  
                  WILLIAM PRICE,    } Committee.  
                  BENJ. H. COATES, }

At the last meeting of the Society, held ninth month, 14th, 1822, it was concluded to discontinue the school, and hand over the balance of the funds "to a female association in the Northern Liberties for colored children," and to present the books belonging to the society, "to the overseers of the Day Schools for Colored People under care of Friends in Willings Alley."

And the Society adjourned finally."

#### ACCOUNT OF THE WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT FROM 1795 TO 1845.

On the thirtieth day of the eleventh month, 1795, a number of women Friends of Philadelphia "met and formed themselves into a society for the improvement of African women in some useful parts of school education." They adopted rules and regulations for their observance, extracts from which are as follows:— "Each member shall pay into the hands of the Treasurer three shillings and nine pence, to be appropriated to the use of the school;" and it is recommended that "the monthly meetings of the Society be kept solidly for the purpose above mentioned, and nothing be discussed in them but what relates to the business for which they are instituted;" that "the school shall be opened at the sixth hour in the evening, and close at half past eight, except on Seventh and First days;" "and two members are to serve as instructors one week at a time. It is expected that each scholar will provide herself with books if able, if not, to be provided out of the stock."

Very soon after the foregoing rules and regulations were agreed upon, a number of the Friends appear to have met to consider of a "suitable place to establish the school in," and "unitedly agreed to accept of a room offered them by Catharine



Haines for that purpose in Fourth Street, between Market and Chestnut," in which room the school was commenced on the evening of Twelfth month, 7th, 1795, and was continued there during six winters. The first season it remained in session until the latter part of the Third month, 1796, with an average attendance during the winter of about twenty-seven pupils; the society appointing eight Friends at each monthly meeting to teach during the following month, two teaching each week. These interested laborers were encouraged from time to time during the winter by the company and religious services of Deborah Darby, Rebecca Young, Lydia Hoskins, Hugh Davis, Arthur Howell, William Savery, Ann Mifflin, Rachel Buckley, Elizabeth Foulke and Sarah Cresson.

Finding some inconvenience to arise from admitting into the school all who applied without a previous knowledge of their character and habits, it was "thought proper to recommend at the next opening of the school that such only be admitted as are of good moral character; and if after being received they are discovered to attend plays and places of amusement, they are to be expelled from the school."

The school was reopened Tenth month, 1796, under the same favorable auspices, and continued during the winter season, two Friends being appointed a standing committee "to visit the school once in two weeks and observe the improvement of the scholars in reading and writing," as well as to reward such as excelled in those branches, or "whose example and behavior entitles them to notice in this way," by presenting them with small books provided for that purpose.

The school increased gradually in numbers during this season, averaging about thirty-two scholars, and was visited from time to time by Martha Routh, Peter Barker, John Hunt, Nathan Smith, John Wigham, Rebecca Jones, Sarah Cresson, Arthur Howell and William Ashby; whose company and religious labors were reported to have been very acceptable and encouraging to the association. Taking into consideration the loss sustained by discontinuing the school during the summer months, it was concluded in the Spring of 1797 to try the

experiment of having school on Fifth day afternoon to commence at five o'clock, which on one month's trial proving unsatisfactory on account of the small number in attendance, was abandoned for the summer. The school was not again opened until the Twelfth month of that year on account of a malignant disease prevailing in the city; which was also the case the next year. The school however continued to increase, averaging during the winter of 1797 about thirty-three, and during 1798 about thirty-eight scholars, and receiving frequent visits from ministering Friends. The monthly meetings of the association were also frequently attended by Friends engaged in the ministry, and appear to have been seasons of Divine favor.

The society believing that "considerable advantage would arise from having a teacher to attend the school constantly," under their direction, Hannah Atherton was engaged, Eleventh month, 1798, to open the school, at a salary of two dollars per week; but her health failing after three months of teaching, she resigned her situation, and the school was conducted as before her appointment until the Spring of 1801, with a general attendance of from fifteen to thirty-five pupils, whose progress in their studies was generally reported from month to month as being satisfactory.

In the Fall of that year the school was opened in a room in Grey's Alley, which the Abolition Society had rented for a day school, and Catharine Jackson was employed as teacher at a salary of 11s. 3d. per week. In the Eleventh month of 1802 a meeting of the society was called at which the following minute was adopted, "after deliberately weighing the subject of again opening the school, we are induced to believe it best to suspend it for the present season, as there are now other schools open for the admission of people of color."

It does not appear that women Friends took further action on the subject of educating colored females until the Sixth month of 1810, when a number of young women Friends "united in forming a society for the instruction of those whose situation exclude them from the opportunity of receiving reg-



ular tuition," and concluded to open a school on First day afternoons from half past two till five o'clock, in a room situated in Fourth street near Chestnut, offered them by one of their number, the school to commence on the first of Seventh month and to be taught by two or more of their number by turns.

This resolution was signed by "Phoebe Jackson, Elizabeth Barker, Rebecca Ridgway, Henrietta Ridgway, Deborah Musgrave, Rebecca Jackson, Ruth Jess, Mary Kirk, Ann Price, Abi Kite and Hannah England."

An unforeseen objection afterwards appearing to holding the school in the room offered them, the upstairs room of Friends' school house in Willings Alley was judged most suitable for the purpose, and the school was accordingly opened there at the time decided upon, and was attended by an average of from forty-five to fifty scholars during the summer. The society adopted seven rules for their own regulation, one of which was as follows: A subscription shall be made of one dollar by each member, on her first joining the society, which shall be renewed yearly." Another provided that the number of members should not exceed sixteen, and that admissions to membership should only be by unanimous consent.

Six rules for the observance of the scholars were also adopted with the following introduction:—"Having believed that some instruction in reading, writing, &c., would be acceptable to many of you whose situation prevent you from attending schools, several young women of the society of Friends have unitedly agreed to furnish you with free instruction in those branches on First day afternoons." An extract from the fifth rule is as follows:—"Collecting in companies either coming to or going from the school, or any kind of conduct in the street, which would bespeak lightness, or give offence to sober people on this day, to be carefully guarded against, that you may not, by attending school on First day, lessen the obligation of observing it as a day of rest, and serious reflection," and "no scholar to leave school without permission."

At a special meeting of the society held Tenth month, 8th, 1810, we find the following minute was adopted: "Apprehend-

ing that a school kept three evenings in a week would be productive of more general advantage than one kept on First day, as it would furnish more frequent opportunities of instruction to the scholars and leave the society at liberty to attend afternoon meetings, it is unanimously agreed to substitute an evening for an afternoon school." The evenings selected were Third, Fourth and Fifth, from half past six to half past eight o'clock; and it was further directed that each scholar should pay twenty-five cents toward defraying the expenses of lighting the rooms, &c. The attendance during this winter was small, averaging about twenty-five pupils. The evenings becoming too short for school purposes, in the Third month 1811, the school was resumed on First day afternoon from two till five o'clock, instead of evenings, until the Tenth month of that year, averaging about twenty-eight scholars.

Thus the school continued to be taught three or four evenings in the week during the winter, and on First day afternoons in the summer months until the spring of 1816, with a varied attendance. The plan of having a regularly employed teacher does not appear to have been attempted after 1798, until the winter of 1812, when Elizabeth Clendenan was engaged for five months, and the school appears to have been unusually well attended during that season. Mary Kite also had charge of the school *several sessions* previous to 1816. We find nothing on record to lead us to suppose that women Friends again turned their attention to teaching colored females until the Eleventh month of 1831, when a number of them met and after adopting rules and regulations for their own and the scholars' observance similar to those of the association of 1810, they engaged Rebecca Conard and Ann Jess to teach four evenings in the week from seven to nine o'clock in a room belonging to Isaac W. Morris on Green's Court, now Griscom Street. Each scholar was charged twenty-five cents towards furnishing lights, etc., and the secretary was authorized to draw on the treasurer of the association of men Friends for the Free Instruction of Colored Adults, for money to pay salaries and other necessary expenses connected with the



school. In the Eleventh month, 1832, a special meeting of the society was called to consider the propriety of opening another school in the "Northern part of the city," the result of which was that one was immediately commenced in the Clarkson school room, situated on Cherry street between Sixth and Seventh, Mary Buffington being engaged as principal teacher. Inasmuch as the association now furnished the necessary funds for conducting these schools it was thought proper for the society to render them a report of their proceedings at the close of each season. An extract from the annual report of 1832-3 is as follows: "In consequence of the increasing number of scholars at Green's Court, early in the winter it became necessary to make some change, and being unable to procure a larger room in a suitable situation, it was deemed expedient to open a school in the Northern part of the city, where, through the kind exertions of your executive committee, we were accommodated with the upper room in the Clarkson school house, which has been occupied since the fourth of Twelfth month, the school averaging twenty pupils. Average number at Green's Court, fifty-four; names entered, 239."

The next winter, obtaining the use of the house previously occupied by the men, in Willings' Alley, which gave them more room, the school in the northern part of the city was discontinued for the season, and but one school was kept up, with an average of from fifty to sixty scholars. In the Fall of 1834 a school was again opened in Green's Court, and another in Chester Street, but owing to the small size of the room, the latter was attended by an average of only about ten or twelve pupils.

The attention of the committee was not entirely confined to improvement in literary knowledge of the women under their charge, for in the annual report of 1834-5 to the men's association, we find the following [remarks:—"It has been grateful to us to witness the interest they have manifested in the Holy Scriptures, many of them being able to repeat a whole chapter in the beginning of each week."

"Temperance almanacs and tracts have been distributed

among them, and some endeavors have been used to awaken them to a sense of the evils resulting from the use of spirituous liquors, we believe with some effect. Twenty-two or twenty-three are willing to sign articles of agreement to refrain from the use of spirits as a drink, and endeavor to discourage the use of it in others. We are disposed to encourage them to form themselves into a society for the furtherance of the object, and hold meetings monthly; the first meeting is to be held on the 10th instant, in the school-room on Green's Court, at eight o'clock in the evening."

The next winter, 1835-6, the "southern" school continued in Green's Court, and the other one was removed from Chester street to Market above Eleventh, and after continuing there two winters was laid down and not again resumed.

Owing to the room on Green's Court being out of repair, the southern school was in 1836-7 returned to the upper room of the Willings' Alley building, where it remained until the society dissolved in 1845, though not without several unsuccessful attempts from year to year to find a more desirable place. In the annual report of 1836-7 the Friends state that "the efforts used to call their attention to the subject of temperance have been in some measure successful; they having founded a society which now numbers 115;" and again in a similar report of 1838 we find the following:—"The subject of temperance has been lately revived among them and the interest manifested by some is cause of encouragement, although we believe there is still room for much labor to be bestowed in this way."

By removal and resignation of membership the society became so reduced in numbers that they were unable to render assistance in teaching, and in 1844 three or four teachers were employed.

At a stated meeting of the society held Third month, 1845, we find the following minute:—"It is concluded to dissolve this association, with the hope however that it may be revived at some future time with renewed zeal and energy."



## ACCOUNT OF THE MEN'S DEPARTMENT FROM 1831 TO 1844.

In returning to the records of the efforts made for the literary instruction of colored men, we do not find an account of the existence of any school for this class from the year 1822 to 1831.

In the Eleventh month of 1831, application was made to the Overseers of the schools for Black People and their descendants "for the use of their school room in Willings' Alley, of evenings during the winter season, for the gratuitous instruction of colored male adults," which we learn by a minute of said overseers was, after deliberate consideration granted. The school held during the ensuing winter appears to have been at first small; as a committee appointed to investigate the cause of its depressed condition at that time, reported, First month 21st, 1832, "that the state of the school when their investigations commenced, at first view, appeared to be very discouraging, but after careful consideration they were inclined to believe that a favorable change might take place. Among the more prominent circumstances, causing the small attendance, were the prevailing epidemic and the Christmas holidays, during the evenings of which there is a general suspension of useful occupations, at least among those who from their ignorance may be supposed not to have a just sense of the value of time and of learning." The committee continue "that to render the room more attractive the number of lights has been increased, and some change made in the books and stationery." "Some exertion was also made out of school to induce the scholars more fully to improve the opportunities afforded them." The committee particularly encouraged "the visitation at their homes of those who are irregular in their attendance, as it convinces them of the sincerity of your professions of interest in them, and by awakening their kindlier feelings, gives weight and influence to salutary counsel."

The condition of the school during this season afterwards improved, and the executive committee under whose charge it was maintained, report on the third of Third month, 1832, a

few days before closing it for the winter, that "on taking a retrospective view of the school, and its concerns from the commencement to the present time, the committee believe that the success which has attended the efforts by which it was established, and has been sustained, is satisfactory, and ought to encourage the association to continue its labors at a future time with zeal and alacrity." The report closes as follows:—"We humbly trust that the labors of this association have been instrumental in elevating the character and condition of some of our hitherto neglected fellow creatures; and may we never forget that in seeking their good we have been benefited and instructed ourselves."

In the year 1832 the present association was organized, under the title of "The Association of Friends for the Free Instruction of Adult Colored Persons," and by one of the provisions of its constitution, the immediate management of the schools devolved upon an executive committee consisting of five members.

The school was opened again in the Fall of 1832, and soon became so large that it was found necessary to provide an additional room and engage another teacher. From the report made by the Executive Committee to the association in the Fourth month of 1833, it appears that the average attendance for that session was about forty-two. The total number who entered their names on the class list is not given, but seems to have been large, as mention is made that the wide difference between the number of names on the roll and the average attendance during the season would appear to indicate a great want of interest in the school, but "it is gratifying to be able to refer the frequent absence of many to the intervention of their religious meetings, and it is obvious that not a few were stimulated to greater exertion in their studies by a desire to become better acquainted with the invaluable contents of the sacred volumes."

The exercises at the school embraced Orthography, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. The Scriptures, though not the only reading book, were much used by the classes, and the



practice of closing the evening by reading a chapter was regularly supported." From these extracts it appears that the course of instruction and plan of conducting the schools were very similar to that of the present time, with the exception that the schools for colored women were then under the care of the Association of Women Friends, who receive an annual appropriation from the funds of this association, and made their reports to its stated meetings. The system of volunteer teaching by members of the executive committee was also adopted and carried on for a number of years, but finally abandoned, as it was found that the irregular attendance and frequent changes resulting from it were prejudicial to the advancement of the pupils.

An additional school was opened in the Adelphi school house on Wager street, on the 15th of Tenth month, 1834, but the attendance being small, the committee soon dispensed with the services of a regular teacher and took charge of it themselves. The number of scholars entered in this school was forty-three, and the average attendance about nine.

On opening the school in the Fall of 1835, it was found difficult to procure a sufficient number of members to assist the regular teacher, and an assistant was engaged with satisfactory results. The progress of many of the pupils during this term is stated to have been very great in spelling, writing and arithmetic.

The annual report made by the Executive Committee in the Fourth month of 1837, shows that the school was conducted in the same place, and in the same manner as heretofore, several of the members of the association devoting a portion of their evenings in assisting the two teachers in their duties. A number of the scholars, during this term, appear to have made striking progress in arithmetic, in which study a large proportion of the pupils were engaged. One scholar acquired a pretty thorough knowledge of the most useful parts of mensuration. Of this man the report states that when he first entered the school, between three and four years previously, he was entirely destitute of learning, but by regular and persevering

efforts he steadily advanced, so that he not only learned to read and write well, but what was of great importance to him in his business, that of a mason, was able to calculate his own work. This individual appears, however, to have attended a day school during a part of this time.

The session of 1837-8 was marked by a much larger attendance than that of any previous years. Several instances of very encouraging improvement in reading are noted, and the laborers in the work seem to have been much encouraged to press forward with renewed zeal. In the year 1838, a Board of Managers was appointed by the association, who, soon after the opening of the schools, organized themselves regularly for the purpose of their more efficient superintendence.

Considerable attention was paid during the session to writing, and a very satisfactory improvement therein was observed. Some who could not form a letter at the commencement, were able to write a plain legible hand at the close of the term. The number entered was one hundred and forty-eight, and the average attendance about forty-one. Application was made by a number of colored persons for the opening of a school in the Northern Liberties in the Fall of 1838, but being unable to procure a suitable room in time, the committee were reluctantly compelled to abandon the design for that winter, but recommended it to the attention of the association for the ensuing season.

In the Fourth month 1839, the Association of Women Friends called the attention of the Men's Association to the consideration of the erection of a suitable building to accommodate both the men's and women's schools, and a committee was appointed to enquire whether the means could be obtained; this committee reported in the following month that they had found a lot on Green's Court, which they believed could be bought for a sum not exceeding two thousand dollars, and from the offers which have been made of lumber and other materials and the general interest manifested by Friends, they were of the opinion that the association would be able to obtain the assistance necessary for the purchase of the lot and for erect-



ing a school-house. At a subsequent meeting, however, the committee reported that they had learned that a building suitable for the accommodation of the day schools, then held in Willing's Alley, would probably soon be erected, which would also afford the night schools ample room. The committee were therefore discharged from further consideration of the subject. The attention was afterwards, however, repeatedly called to the subject by the Board of Managers, who found the accommodation in Willing's Alley insufficient for the numbers applying for instruction. In the report made Fourth month 2nd, 1840, they state that the school filled up with unprecedented rapidity, and they were obliged to decline entering the names of about forty persons, ten of whom were, however, afterwards admitted.

During the five succeeding years the schools were continued in the same place, and with about the same number in attendance. In the Fall of 1841, an additional assistant teacher was employed, and in the Fall of 1844 the increasing number in attendance rendered it desirable to secure the services of still another assistant, making the regular force of teachers a principal and three assistants.

## JOINT SCHOOLS.

Since 1845.

In 1845, the school for women, which had been discontinued by the Association of Women Friends, was taken charge of by this association, and at a special meeting, held Ninth month 22nd, the Board of Managers were authorized to "open a school for colored women simultaneously with that for colored men." The Board was at the same time increased by the addition of two members, and thenceforward consisted of nine managers, together with the Treasurer of the association as member *ex officio*. During the ensuing winter, one-hundred-and-sixty-four women were admitted to the school, forty-three of whom attended on an average each evening during the

term; and this evidence of its usefulness together with a larger attendance of men than had previously been known encouraged the association to re-open both schools the following winter, and they have since been regularly maintained.

In 1846 the building at the corner of Raspberry and Aurora streets, (then Shield's Court,) was erected by the "Overseers of the Schools for Black People and their Descendants," for the accommodation of the schools for children under their care; and their rooms having been rented by the association for use in the evenings, the schools for men and women were opened in this more commodious and comfortable location on the 12th of Tenth month of that year. Desks and seats for about one hundred scholars were here provided, and these improved accommodations, the Managers remark, tended to attract during that winter, "an increased and more regular attendance." This building is situated conveniently to the residences of a large number of colored people, and during the forty-four years that have since elapsed, it has been constantly used for this purpose.

The opportunity which these schools afforded to the colored residents of Philadelphia, to obtain literary instruction, was often eagerly embraced by those to whom, in their earlier days a similar opportunity had been denied by law. Many who were formerly slaves, shared in their teachings, and these, as stated in one of the reports of the Managers, "seemed most to value the facilities here offered for acquiring knowledge." "Not a few of the colored men and women living in our community," the managers remark in 1847, "grew up in neighborhoods where the avenues of learning are closed against them. Persons of this class and others enter these schools every winter, wholly ignorant of book learning, yet such has been the progress of some of them, that after one session's attendance they could read the Testament with but little difficulty."

Among the cases of this kind alluded to by the Managers, was that of an intelligent man who attended the school during the winter of 1848-9. He had formerly been a slave in



Georgia, but had become free, and at an expense of nineteen-hundred dollars, had obtained the freedom of his wife, and through counsel he had petitioned the Legislature for the privilege of having his children educated in that State, which being refused he had left the position of engineer on a railroad, which he held, and moved his residence to the North for the express purpose of allowing his children the opportunity of obtaining instruction.

The number of those attending the schools, who had formerly been held in bondage in the South, was so considerable, that upon their removal from the city, together with other colored persons, in consequence of unjust summary proceedings, under the Fugitive Slave Law, the size of the men's school was quite reduced. From this and other causes a very perceptible diminution in the numbers entered was at once apparent.

The annual report of the Managers in 1858 contains the following remarks in reference to the condition of the colored people at this period :

"In viewing their condition as it really is—their minds fettered by ignorance, shut out from the lights of learning and science by prejudice; forbidden the fields of honorable labor and equal competition by the jealousy of their more favored fellows of a paler skin; do they not indeed call upon us to commiserate their condition; do they not prefer against their fellow creatures more highly favored of their Heavenly Father's bounty a claim on their sympathy, and Christian regard, which reaches the heart in that familiar but touching appeal, "Am I not a man and a brother?"

In the Autumn of 1860, application was made to the association by a few colored men residing in South Camden, N. J., to open a school in the evenings for their instruction, in a house built by, and belonging to the colored people in that neighborhood. Upon examination it was found that at least one hundred persons of both sexes, mostly adults, would probably attend such a school, if held. And sufficient funds to defray its expenses having been collected, partly from residents

of that state, the school was opened under the care of a committee of the association on the 3rd of Twelfth month, 1860. The school was continued for three months and was attended by one-hundred-and-forty scholars of both sexes. The services of five teachers were required for a part of the time, and the average number attending on each evening was about forty. The committee believed that the expenditure of time, means and labor involved in setting up and superintending this school was well bestowed, and it was thought by residents in that neighborhood that it had exercised a beneficial influence upon those who attended. This school was re-opened in the following winter, and was attended by one hundred and twenty-one scholars, thirty-four of whom were present on an average each evening. The usefulness of this school was so apparent that after the withdrawal of the association from its management, it was maintained with some assistance from their white friends, for some time by the colored people themselves, to whom the use of the books, etc., left there by the association, was freely granted.

Apprehensions of the hostility often manifested towards the colored portion of the community in this city, frequently materially affected the size of the schools, and a diminution in the numbers applying for admission, and in those attending, has also often been noticed during times of unusual difficulty, in obtaining employment, or the prevalence of contagious disease in the city. The occupations of many of this class during the day are generally laborious, and the additional discouragements from these sources were sufficient to deprive them of the disposition to make the effort required to attend schools held in the evening.

For the first few years after the schools were removed to their present location, about one hundred and eighty-nine men and two hundred and twenty-five women were annually entered as scholars. The number registered afterwards became smaller, and during the ten years immediately preceding the abolition of slavery in this country, a time when unusual gloom overspread the prospects of the colored people,



they averaged but one hundred and fourteen men, and two hundred and five women. Since that era in their history, however, a more hopeful feeling has pervaded their community in this city, as well as elsewhere, and a more earnest desire for instruction has been apparent.

About the year 1868 the following observations were made by the Managers then in charge of the schools:

"During the past four years the average number registered has been two hundred men and two hundred and ninety-six women; and the greatest numbers who have ever attended the schools have also been registered within this period, viz: in the Winter of 1864-5, when five hundred and forty-six scholars were admitted, (one hundred and nineteen men and three hundred and forty-seven women); and in the Winter of 1865-6, when the aggregate number was five hundred and twenty-nine.

"During the past few years a large number of freedmen have availed themselves of these advantages for obtaining literary instruction; and with an earnestness which has been followed by a rapid improvement. During the Winter of 1866-7, one third of the whole number of men attending, it was estimated, were of this class. The attendance of the scholars has always been irregular, and owing to circumstances incident to their condition in life, many of them are unable to attend more than one or two evenings in the week. The attendance, however, in the early part of the session has generally of latter years, been as large as the accommodations could admit of; and on several evenings they have been uncomfortably crowded. During the Eleventh month of 1865 the average attendance on each evening during the month in the women's school was one hundred and seven, taxing the capacity of the school to the utmost. The average number who attend, however, throughout the session, is generally about one-fourth to one-third of the total number on the register.

"The studies pursued in these schools have always been of the elementary character, suited to the unlettered condition

“of the class for which they were designed. A large proportion of the men and women who have entered them have been unable to read and write; and the imparting of instruction in these branches, and in cyphering has been their chief work. Within the last few years Geography has been frequently taught with advantage from maps, and a number of miscellaneous facts of a useful character have been committed to memory as an occasional exercise. Considerable information has often been given to the classes in different years by addresses on various subjects with illustrations by members of the association and other persons interested in the schools.

“The acquisition of the knowledge necessary for performing ordinary business calculations, together with the ability on the part of many of them, to realize the long cherished desire of reading the Holy Scriptures, have been the chief objects in view by those who have attended them.

“Owing to the large number of both men and women in our city who are unable to read and write, greater facilities are required than this association is capable of supplying. And though occasional labor has often been performed in this field by other kindred voluntary organizations, yet it is apparent that this work is now too great to be adequately performed by associations of this character. and is one which from its importance to the individuals themselves, prospectively to their children, and indirectly to the community around them, may properly claim the attention of those who are engaged in extending our noble system of public instruction.

“A large number of colored people in this city have been deprived of the opportunity in younger life of obtaining literary instruction by the laws of the State in which they grew up, and from the earnest desire which these show for self-improvement; from the hopeful feeling which is now animating the colored people as a race in regard to the future, and the disposition generally manifested to aid them to rise in social position, the present period appears to be an opportune time not only diligently to continue to furnish them with all



“ the assistance which the existing schools can afford, but also  
 “ to extend to them judicious public aid to foster and encourage  
 “ these desires for obtaining the qualifications for more exten-  
 “ sive usefulness, and intellectual advancement.

“ The public schools have been open to the children of  
 “ this people for many years past, and a considerable propor-  
 “ tion of those of suitable age are now attending them; and in  
 “ giving to the present generation of parents and caretakers,  
 “ that education which will enable them to appreciate the  
 “ value of school learning, they will be interested in extending  
 “ its benefits to the younger generation; and it is to be hoped  
 “ that as these schools for the instruction of colored adults were  
 “ originally established to compensate in some degree for the  
 “ privations which slavery entailed upon this people; with the  
 “ more thorough education of the children among them, the  
 “ time may come when the necessity for their continuance will  
 “ disappear with the blighting effects of the scourge which  
 “ called them forth.

“ It is therefore of great moment that all the true friends  
 “ of the colored race of this generation should be fully alive to  
 “ the importance of the subject of opening schools for the edu-  
 “ cation of adults, that they should be earnest in their support  
 “ of the schools already established; use what influence may  
 “ be in their power to enlist others in the cause, and secure, if  
 “ possible, the public aid, interest and sympathy in sustaining  
 “ it.

“ Probably at no former period were greater results effected  
 “ than can now be done by well directed, faithful and earnest  
 “ efforts, and never before was the end more plainly in view  
 “ than now. History has recorded the extinction of slavery in  
 “ America at about two hundred years after the Society of  
 “ Friends commenced their labors in the cause; and in one-  
 “ half that period, after the society first established schools for  
 “ the free instruction of colored adults, if the members of this  
 “ day are dilligent in the work before them, History *may* record  
 “ that the necessity for them has passed away.”

The annual report of Third month 7th, 1871, says, “ since

our last report an important event in the history of the colored people in this state has taken place, the exercise by them for the first time of the right of suffrage. With the acquisition of this right, new responsibilities have been incurred, properly to discharge which, a certain degree of education appears to be indispensable."

In the annual report for 1872, we are informed that two schools had been maintained during the winter at the public expense.

The following remarks regarding the attendance are taken from the report made Third month 4th, 1873:—

"The average for the whole term has been about thirty-five men, and thirty women, and the total number registered one hundred and nine and one hundred and thirty-four respectively. These numbers do not vary materially from those of the last three years, but are smaller than those recorded during the latter years of the war, and the years immediately succeeding.

In considering the causes of this decline in the attendance of our schools, a partial explanation may be found in the existence of a few public night schools for the same class of scholars, and also in the fact that some who have attended for several years, and learned to read and write, do not aim at further improvement. There is encouragement, however, in the maintenance of these schools, in the industry and progress of the comparatively few who do attend, and though many of the colored residents of Philadelphia may fail to appreciate the advantages here offered them, there are those to be provided for, coming from distant places, (of whom we have numbered many among our scholars) whose desire for learning amply repays the attention given them."

There were five public night schools reported open during the following winter, 627 pupils being enrolled.

Our schools were continued from year to year without interruption or much of special interest to remark, until the term of 1885-6, when a fire occurred on the night of Eleventh month 18th, 1885, so injuring the building that it was need-



ful to adjourn the schools until repairs were made. The schools were not reopened until First month 11th, 1886. This interruption proved quite fatal to the school, as the attendance fell very decidedly, both schools being small during the remainder of the term.

In the report of 1888-9, we find the following:—

“The character of the instruction has been very much as heretofore, though we believe there were fewer in attendance who needed teaching of the most elementary kind. A large proportion in each department were among the young and middle aged, many of whom did very creditable work, and all seemed to appreciate the privilege thus offered them.”

The foregoing minute indicates the condition of the schools for several years past, there being quite a noticeable difference in the age of those who attend. The averages for the year 1889-90 were smaller than those of the previous winter, yet that of the women was equal to the average for the past twenty years.

Owing to the removal by death of many of our subscribers, and the feeling that exists among others that those who attend our schools should go to the schools provided by the public, the subscription list has been much reduced, so that it became needful annually to use some of the invested principle to meet current expenses.

The Managers reported this condition of affairs to the association at a meeting thereof, held First month, 1890; when a committee was appointed to investigate the subject, and report at the next meeting of the association.

At a meeting of the Association, held Fourth Month, 14th, 1890, the following report was read:

To the Association of Friends for the free instruction of Adult Colored persons:

The Committee appointed at the last stated meeting to consider important changes proposed by the Board of Managers; all met but two Friends.

The following facts claimed their attention:

That the annual subscription list is steadily decreasing.

owing to the death of some subscribers, and the refusal of others to continue their donations, on the ground that the need for the schools no longer exists.

That although a donation of two hundred and fifty (250) dollars was received from the Trustees of the Sheppard legacy, the expenses of conducting the schools for the season of 1889-1890, exceeded the income, by about one hundred and forty (140) dollars, which amount will have to be provided from the invested funds of the Association. These funds now amount to about twenty-seven hundred and fifty (2750) dollars.

That five public night schools have been opened and in session for the past season, for the class of scholars that attend our schools, and convenient of access to them.

The Board of Managers have suggested, that in view of the above recited facts, the Schools conducted by the Association be discontinued, and that the assets be handed over to an Institution such as the Industrial Department of the Institute for Colored Youth.

From an official report of that concern, dated in the Third month last, it appears that the Industrial Department is in a satisfactory condition, ninety-six male scholars are in attendance receiving instruction three evenings in the week in Carpentry, Bricklaying, Plastering, Shoemaking, Tailoring and Printing, and one hundred and seven female scholars have lessons four afternoons in the week in Dressmaking, Millinery and Cooking.

Upon careful consideration, the Committee united in the judgment that the proposition of the Board of Managers be adopted, and although no legal advice has been taken they believe there would be no obstruction to the adoption by the Association of the following recommendation, viz: that the Treasurer of this Association be directed to hand to the Treasurer of the Institute for Colored Youth, the securities and assets in his hands belonging to the Association, to be placed to the credit of the Industrial Department of the said Institute, and to be held in the same manner and for the same purpose as other similar donations that have been made to that f



After careful consideration it was deemed most prudent to obtain legal advice regarding the proposed transfer, and the subject was again referred to the Committee for their further care.

This Committee made a second report to the Association at their meeting held Tenth month 13th, 1890, as follows:

That they have taken legal advice upon the subject, and have received an opinion from J. Willis Martin, in which he says: "I am of opinion that it is lawful for the Managers to apply such money as they deem expedient to further the cause of education of Colored Youth by paying it directly to the Colored Institute, but would advise that the Organization of the Society be maintained, with a view of avoiding confusion in the event of legacies being left to it."

In consideration of the foregoing, the Committee recommended that our schools be discontinued for the present, and that so much of the income from our funds, as the Association may from time to time direct, be paid to the Institute for Colored Youth, to be applied for the benefit of the Industrial Department.

The report and recommendation of the Committee were approved of by the Association.







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